disbursement of credit to the farmers over the last few years.

Functioning of Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortiums

2895. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the functioning of the Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortiums;

(b) the work done by these Consortiums; and

(c) the efforts made in the areas of getting credfit facilities and market linkages for the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) At the Central level Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) has been set up as a Registered Society under the Societies Registration Act w.e.f. 18.1.94. The States have been advised to nominate an appropriate agency–organisation to handle the SFAC work and undertake project activities.

At the initiative of the Central Government, project studies had been undertaken in 12 identified districts namely Barpeta (Assam). Mahbubnagar (Andhra Pradesh), Valsad (Gujarat) Dharwar (Karnataka), Ernakulam (Kerala), Jabalpur (M.P.), Ganjam (Orissa), Pondicherry, Bikaner (Rajasthan), Pithoragarh (U.P.), Dharmapuri (Tamil Nadu), and Midnapur (West Bengal) in order to identify the areas for developing agri-business. The project reports are ready and the states have been advised to initiate action for considering the implmentation of the project reports. District level workshops have also been held in Rajasthan, Assam, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu with a view to generate awareness of the concept of SFAC and promote agri-business activities.

(c) NABARD had been involved in the project formulation/preparation in the 12 identified districts so that the credit needs at the stage of implementation are taken care of. The market linkages are to be taken into account when the states get ready for the implementation of the projects.

Achievements of Krishi Vigyan Kendras

2896. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have studies the achievements of existing Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country, particularly in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any improvement is required in their functioning; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The achievements of existing Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country including Gujarat have been reviewed by the Quinquennial Review Team (QRT) in 1993 constituted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Besides, every year State and Zonal workshops are organized to review the achievements of KVKs.

(c) and (d) The important areas suggested by QRT for improvement include; identification of training programmes through bench-mark survey, scheduling of training programmes in advance, conducting training programmes based on the principles of Adult Learning, involvement of Directors of Extension of State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) in planning KVK activities, developing strong linkages with SAUs and other Research Institutions for technical back-stopping and identification of disciplines required for fulfilling the mandate and functions of each KVK on

the basis of prevailing agro-climatic conditions and farming systems.

As suggested by QRT, the State and Zonal level Orientation Training cum Workshops were organised to implement these suggestions for improving the functioning of KVKs

Death Stalks Starved Bolangir

2897. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in "The Hindustan Times" date the 12th February, 1997 under the caption "Death Stalks Starved Bolangir";

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of India have requested the National Human Rights Commission to enquire into the reported starvation deaths in Bolangir district. A Team of Officers from the Commission undertook a visit of the State on 12—14th December, 1996. Government have not received any report from the Commission in this regard so far.

Setting up of Indian council of Agricultural Research Centre in Gujarat

2898. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Centre of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research has been set up in Gujarat, during the last two yars;

(b) if not, reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to set up one such Research Centre in the State in the near future; and

(d) if so, the place where it is likely to be set-up?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) An Agricultural Research Centre on All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on White Grub has been set up at Anand Campus of Gujarat Agricultural University w.e.f. 1.10.95.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) Since there are already 2 National Research Centres for Groundnut and for Medicinal and Aromatic Plants and 46 Centres/Regional Stations of AIRCRPs set up in Gujarat State, there is no proposal at present to set up new Research Centre in near future.

(d) Question does not arise.

Fertilizer Subsidy to the States

2899. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of Fertilizer subsidy released to the different States of the country, particularly Punjab, for farmers during the years 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(b) the details thereof; State-wise;

(c) whether the entire amount of subsidy has been utilized by each State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons for non-utilisation of the aforesaid amount?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) At present, subsidy is given on urea which is under Statutory Price Control and subsidy is given to the manufacturing units and importers and not to the States. In addition, concession is given on sale of decontrolled phosphatic and potassic fertilizers to the farmers. Reimbursement of concession on sale of these P&K fertilizers is made not to the States but to the fertilizer suppliers on the basis of